

FIRST SOVIET EXPERIMENT

terms.² A more detailed definition of Soviet attitude was contained in a longer note sent on June 26, 1919, by Deputy Foreign Commissar Leon Karakhan and delivered by Kolomyitsev, unofficial representative of Moscow in Iran. The note announced that (a) the Iranian debts to tsarist Russia were annulled; (b) the Russian privileged position in the Iranian customs, post, and telegraph administration was to be ended; (c) all Russian public and private concessions in Iran were renounced; (d) the Russian Discount Bank in Iran was to become the property of the Iranian people; (e) all the railroads, harbor equipment, highways, and similar establishments constructed and owned by tsarist Russia were declared Iranian property; and (f) the capitulations were declared null and void.³

If the Soviet government counted on Iranian gratitude because of this widely publicized generosity, it made a mistake. The Iranians were ready to receive these gifts, but they believed that they were entitled to compensation for the damages that Iran, as a neutral territory, had incurred during the war. Besides, the reckless abandonment by the new Russia of her privileges and possessions in Iran was, in the Iranian view, not so much a sign of sincere generosity as an obvious sign of Soviet weakness. And weakness is not a factor that, in international relations, produces feelings of friendship. The Iranian government considered that the time had come to reclaim from a weak Russia those territories that Iran had lost in the past to a strong Russia. An Iranian delegation was sent, under Foreign Minister Mushavar ul-Mamalek, to Paris to present claims before the Peace Conference. It was refused admission on the ground that

² The respective passages of these two documents run as

follows:

(1) The armistice agreement, paragraph X: "Upon the basis of the principle of the freedom, independence, and territorial inviolability of the neutral Persian State, the Turkish and the Russian Supreme Commands are prepared to withdraw their troops from Persia. They will immediately enter into communication with the Persian Government, in order to regulate the details of the evacuation and the other necessary measures for the guaranteeing of the above-mentioned principle."

(2) The treaty, Article VII: "In view of the fact that Persia and Afghanistan are free and independent States, the contracting parties obligate themselves to respect the political and economic independence and the territorial integrity of these States."

a Louis Fischer, *The Soviets in World Affairs* (New York, 1930), I, 289.